

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Margaret Uyehara

"Mr. John Hara from the post office, and lawyer Chuck Mau and his friend Michiro Watanabe, who was a lawyer, too. They were good friends; they used to be our regulars [at the New Capitol Café]. Our lunch used to be something like American Café, about thirty-five cents. Choice of soup or fruit cocktail. And those days, we gave three pieces of bread: raisin, brown, and white. Ice tea or coffee to drink with, and the pie was homemade. We used to go four o'clock in the morning to work, just because my husband always worried about the pie."

Margaret Uyehara was born in 1916 in Kainaule Camp in Pāpa'ikou, Hawai'i, to Okinawan—immigrants, Yama and Kama Takara. Her father worked in the sugarcane fields of the plantation and was employed by independent cane cultivators. Her mother took in laundry and cooked meals.

Margaret Uyehara completed her elementary education at Kalaniana'ole School and Tahara Gakkō. After the family moved to O'ahu in 1929, she completed a grade or two at Washington Intermediate School and McCully Japanese-language School before hard times forced her to quit.

To contribute to the family income, she, like her siblings, found work at a restaurant. Until her marriage to Herbert Uyehara in 1937, she worked as a waitress at the Bluebird Café.

After her marriage, she helped at American Café. In 1938, the Uyeharas with the encouragement of Kame Uyehara became owner/operators of the New Capitol Café in downtown Honolulu.

In 1945, Herbert and Margaret Uyehara opened Capitol Drive In in Kaimukī. They continued operations until the early 1970s when their lease expired.

A mother of five, Margaret Uyehara, and many of her family reside on O'ahu.

Tape No. 40-4-1-02

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Margaret Uyehara (MU)

Kaimukī, O'ahu

July 2, 2002

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Margaret Umeno Takara Uyehara at her home in Kaimukī, O'ahu on July 2, 2002. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

So, Mrs. Uyehara, we're going to start our interview today, and just like I told you, I'm just going to ask questions and you can answer any way you want.

MU: All right. That'd be fine with me. Thank you.

MK: And so, first of all, when were you born?

MU: [In the year,] 1916.

MK: And where were you born?

MU: In Kainaule, a small camp above Onomea in Pāpa'ikou.

MK: And what number child are you in the family?

MU: I'm the third. Two boys above me, and I'm the third girl, and there's a brother below me.

MK: What was your mother's name and father's name?

MU: Oh, Yama is my father and Kama is my mother. It's Takara. Of Oroku village in Okinawa.

MK: I don't know how much your mother and father told you about their life or family in Okinawa, but try tell me what you remember from them.

MU: Okay, well, I had an older sister that came from Okinawa and an older brother named Keikyu that came from Okinawa, too. Both of them. He was very active with lobbying with Governor [John A.] Burns. That's my brother. Always—he is the one that started the free tuition for seniors at the University [of Hawai'i]. It was very active for the senior [citizens] group.

MK: So you have an older . . .

MU: Older brother and older sister.

- MK: That came from Okinawa?
- MU: Yes, besides my two brothers here.
- MK: And, what do you know about why your mother and father came from Oroku to Hawai'i.
- MU: I only know that they had relatives here that said it was prosperous and good money-making. They followed their cousins or whoever and went to Kainaule.
- MK: In Kainaule, what kind of work did your father do?
- MU: Sugarcane. Either in the plantation or some person owned [or contracted sugarcane cultivation], and he used to work for the company or whoever had.
- MK: And your mother, what did she do?
- MU: Just take in clothes and wash clothes, cook, make vegetables. Oh, I remember she used to make lots of lilies for the graduation for my brother. That's what they used to take, white lilies, calla lilies for graduation in Pāpa'ikou. It was special.
- MK: You said that your older brother and sister, they came later from Okinawa. How about your mother?
- MU: He came along with my mom and her sister. The three of them. And then, later on my sister—she's Mrs. Kakazu—came.
- MK: When you look back, you look at how your family was living in the camp, was your family doing okay, or were they having a hard time, or what do you think?
- MU: Not okay. I know the houses had all holes, rough lumbers, the brown kind, that rough one. So just to hide the holes from the next door, we used to put catalogs, paste it—Sears catalog—on the wall and newspapers and all kinds of paper. The water was in a big tank, with lots of mosquito, from the rain. That's what we drink, and then, we didn't care. Our special candy was peaches from the yard, big peach tree. And was good, those days.
- MK: Your house, try describe for me what your house looked like over there.
- MU: Okay. I know the kitchen was separate from the house so when it rains we have to get wet to go right across to the house to the kitchen. And then, when visitors came, our house being close to the road, she always made big pancake, sometime with *azuki* inside, so, so fat. You can cut it up like pizza. Oh, but it tasted so good, Michi-san. And that was special only when guests come.
- MK: How big was your house?
- MU: Very, very big. Maybe two rooms. And then, kitchen was separate, so. And then [we] had a long veranda where you can sit down and play around. All over had yards where the neighbors' kids can run around and come over.
- MK: And then, how about the *furo* and bathroom?
- MU: The first time was the outhouse, where you cut out the newspaper and magazines and hang it up on the wall. And the *furo* was public kind, where you go in all together,

everybody. We had to get wood to put [under] the *furo* [to heat it]. It used to be hot all the time. It was always ready for the plantation workers, the *furo*. Flume from bathroom to ocean. The bathroom, the water used to just run right through. Right through. Plantation supplied that, I think, for the workers. Where you didn't have to cover it up, the water went right through down and all the way, where we used to go fishing (laughs). Interesting, isn't it?

MK: So different from now, yeah?

MU: Yeah, I think Mr. Moir, John T. Moir he was the [manager] of the [Onomea Sugar Company] plantation all around there. John T. Moir, the Scottish man. I remember when I went school one day, this boy from Scotland or Ireland came in and said he's John T. Moir's grandson, and he couldn't speak English (chuckles). He was a tall redhead boy, nice-looking, and he was in my class. I made friends with him, a big boy, too, which he liked it. It was interesting.

MK: You mentioned the public *furo*, who ran the *furo*? Who took care of the *furo*?

MU: They took turns, whoever. I don't think they paid any money. It was a plantation thing, like the toilet. It was well made. The cottage had under house where we used to hang all the [equipment for making] *mochi*, *usu*, and then you know the *seirō* and stuff. It used to be under the house, was so high, under house.

MK: So the under house area, you could use as storage.

MU: Yeah.

MK: You just mentioned that you folks had the *usu* and the *seirō*, when did you folks make *mochi*?

MU: We made New Year's, on the eve, and *kazaru*. Everybody got together and made. It was a community thing. And then you could just go out in the back and find *matsu* and stuff, *take*. In fact, *takenoko* we used to go pick to eat, and was good.

MK: So, fresh *takenoko* then?

MU: Yeah. Lots of 'em. That's when we went swimming, we go on the side and pick all the *takenoko*, pick all the 'ōpae from. . . . You know those black, not 'ōpae, but . . .

MK: *Hihīwai*?

MU: What you call that?

MK: They look like little snails?

MU: Yeah, snails, yeah. 'Ōpae. Not 'ōpae, 'opihi. That's what we used to cook in the can and eat. Make fire, put *shōyu*. Steal something from somebody's garden, eat with it, had good fun.

MK: So you folks could go play in the stream, and go get the black snails, and then you folks got *takenoko*.

MU: *Takenoko*, of course, we bring home. And then way up the mountain we'll find, you know the purple *liliko* 'i? *Pokapoka*, we used to call. The place was called *Poka* place. Several homes were there.

MK: What did you folks do with the *poka*?

MU: Just eat like that, and get stuffed shirt.

(Laughter)

I tell you, Michi. And then, the guavas, all the guavas in the world you can pick. Take home for make jelly or jam or whatever.

MK: You mentioned that New Year's Eve time the community would get together and make *mochi*, yeah? In those days, where your house was, the camp, what kind of people lived in your camp?

MU: All the same kind. All mixtures. Of course, Japanese mostly. All different *ken*, so they had all different ways. But we went to this clubhouse, where in the morning they would read the *chokugo*, which is that Meiji *tennō*'s message to the people. They read that and we all stand in silence, and pray, and there's a big *mochi* that somebody made. You know, *kazari*. It was really traditional Japanese.

MK: So you had all kinds of Japanese in your camp. Had *Naichi* from different camps.

MU: Also Filipinos, too. Filipinos were working, too. They had different camp, though, way in the. . . .

MK: So the Filipinos were in a separate camp?

MU: Yeah, separate, yeah.

MK: Kainaule was mostly Japanese—*Naichi*, and Okinawan?

MU: Yeah.

MK: And, where did most of the Okinawans come from in Kainaule Camp?

MU: Some of them were Yomitan, because they were good in *Bon* dance. That's where *Bon* dance started, you know, Yomitan. So if you're Yomitan, you good. My folks, they were only business people, Oroku. They never danced. They didn't know what was pleasure. But, my daughter married to Shiroma, who's all related to the Motobus. There are Yomitan people. They're good, *Bon* dance.

MK: So in Kainaule Camp, you had some Yomitan people, and you had Oroku?

MU: Yeah, mm-hmm. *Naichi*—Yamashita, Takeuchi. I don't know what kind they are, but they used to eat *chagai*. Because when they came—when we went to lunchtime, she said, "Oh my *chagai*." (Chuckles) With the *imo* inside and stuff. That's where I learned to eat beans. They eat lots of beans, you know, *edamame*, big kind, and 'ono, the way they cook.

MK: So what kind of food did you bring for *bentō*?

- MU: You know, the *ika* that's cut up fine. *Ito ika* or something. That kind, my mother used to fry and put on top the rice.
- MK: What else did you folks eat those days?
- MU: I can't forget the beans that she used to make, bring all the time, and give me, too. Was so good, Michi-san.
- MK: So, beans and *ika*?
- MU: And then, *kai*—you know what's *kai no hoshitano*? *Da kine*, it's a *kai*, but the end part.
- MK: Mmm. Okay, yeah.
- MU: That's what they used to cook with *takenoko*. And oh, used to be so 'ono.
- MK: And then your family, what did they raise in their garden?
- MU: Besides the flowers, all *daikon*. *Gobō* was so hard to pick, so deep inside. And cucumbers, they didn't want to plant too much because we used to go steal when we cook that fish or whatever because of the shoyu, we eat the cucumber. It was good fun place to live and roam around.
- MK: How about chickens or pig?
- MU: Not much chicken, not much pig. No more space, I think.
- MK: Where did you folks get your fish from?
- MU: Oh, this man used to come from Hilo in a truck, fishing truck. I can't remember his name. He used to ring the bell. Not only that, [H.] Ishigo from Honomū used to come to sell *senbei*. The poor man, many times the boys used to go and steal (chuckles). But, that was a pleasure we waited for, Ishigo's.
- MK: And who else would come to sell things? You have the fish man, you have Ishigo, who else used to come up the camp?
- MU: Maybe once in a while the Portuguese bread man would come. They would come and sell their bread from Onomea side. Onomea had lots of Portuguese with the oven, yeah, and we looked forward to Portuguese bread and we don't even have butter (chuckles).
- MK: How about, those days, sometimes some places had *chūmon-tori* from the plantation store, how about your place?
- MU: Yeah, used to come here. That's canned goods and rice and stuff. *Somen* or *udon*. *Udon* mostly and then *iwashi*, no? Ten-cents kind, *iwashi*, or sardine. That's what we ate a lot. Oh, don't forget that big cracker, calaboose cracker, you put milk on top. That was the snack for us, a treat.
- MK: So, those days, where was the plantation store?
- MU: Down in Pāpa'ikou. Pāpa'ikou had the store and Inouye Theatre, and Ah Ching Pai, and Hasegawa Store, Taniguchi Meat Market in Pāpa'ikou.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: So, before the telephone call, you were telling me about Pāpa'ikou. You had Inouye Theatre, Hasegawa Store, Taniguchi Meat Market.

MU: And had the hospital. And then, don't forget now, Pāpa'ikou had this famous Japanese[-language] school. There were two Japanese schools. One was Hongwanji, but ours was . . .

MK: *Dokuritsu?*

MU: Yeah. Japanese school, I want to know the name. It was such a famous teacher.

MK: Is that the Tahara?

MU: Tahara's *gakkō*, yeah. Tahara. Oh, how come you knew? Lots of people talk about it, yeah.

MK: Mm-hmm.

MU: We belong to that school and was good. When I came here, I was so way ahead because they were so good. We call boy teacher and girl teacher, and then it was really amazing how they used to do. My brother used to be good in Japanese school. When he graduated, he represented his fellow students to receive the *shōsho*, yeah. They bow, they walk three steps, walk back and bow, and receive that. It was an honor, I tell you. But, he refused to have my mama go because she had tattoo. After graduation, there's always *undōkai*. So old-fashioned Japanese community. Then, it's a big affair, all day long we eat lunch, and stay there, play.

MK: But your brother didn't want your mother to come because she had the *irezumi*, the tattoo?

MU: Yeah. It shows that he's Okinawan. You don't want to be Okinawan in a Japanese School. Those days, it was only him that felt small, maybe. It didn't mean anything to us, we all went work together and, you know, were close, like sisters.

MK: So, how come he felt that way?

MU: I really don't know. Maybe he was sort of outstanding student, he felt small to be Okinawan, maybe.

MK: In your camp, how were *Naichi* and *Uchinanchu*? Did they get along?

MU: Oh yeah, get along really well. We were all close, help each other.

MK: And then, Pāpa'ikou, how far was Pāpa'ikou from Kainaule Camp?

MU: Maybe about ten miles because we had to catch bus. We have a special school bus every morning to take us to school because it's a long walk, ten miles. And then, we'd stop at Kalaoa, going home.

MK: Those days, how many children would get on the bus at Kainaule Camp and go down to Pāpa'ikou?

- MU: Would be about maybe twenty or more. Everybody would get on the bus, nobody would be left out.
- MK: And because you folks are ten miles away, how early did you folks have to leave home?
- MU: Oh, same as when they go to work, the plantation workers or the field workers. We leave about the same time. Only thing, we had to bring lunch, too, *bentō*. Don't have money to buy lunch, which was only fifteen cents, though. They had cafeteria and it was special, but we didn't have money to buy. The toilet over there was same thing, running water, Pāpa'ikou School. It was one of the best around that neighborhood, not neighborhood, but Pāpa'ikou School. They were famous for their baseball team. Matsumoto brothers were famous.
- MK: You know this school in Pāpa'ikou, what was its name? What did they call it?
- MU: Kalaniana'ole. And then, they had from Pauka'a, a separate camp. More towards Hilo, Pauka'a. They had kids from there, too, and then Kalaoa, and then us from Onomea side.
- MK: When you think about Kalaniana'ole School, what did it look like in those days?
- MU: It was beautiful. You can imagine, big cement, and did you know that we used to wash—had water in the front—we used to wash our feet to go in.
- MK: Oh.
- MU: Can you believe that? We don't wear shoes. We all *hadashi*, so we wash our feet in that water. It was automatically filled up with water and we used to wash our feet.
- MK: And so, from what grade did you go to Kalaniana'ole School?
- MU: I remember second grade because I seen this boy from—John T. Moir's grandson—just about second grade maybe.
- MK: At this Kalaniana'ole School, what do you remember about the other students? What kind of kids went over there?
- MU: You know what? I used to remember the auditorium they had and we had Christmas party downstairs. It was auditorium—one side was cafeteria, one side was auditorium, with the office on the top. And the long cement building was first of its kind, I think, around there.
- MK: And then, how many classrooms did it have?
- MU: Oh, plenty.
- MK: For each grade, how many classes were there? What do you think?
- MU: I know there were three Araujo sisters that were teachers in the elementary side. And they lived right across—the teacher's cottage was across from the school. And had this Catholic church right near.
- MK: And so, you had the school, you had the teacher's cottages, you had the Catholic school . . .

MU: No, not school, church.

MK: A Catholic church. What else was around there?

MU: Railroad station. Was near the Hongwanji School, almost entrance to another camp I told you.

MK: Pauka'a?

MU: No, not Pauka'a.

MK: Kalaoa?

MU: Yeah, Kalaoa. The railroad station was right there in Kalaoa. And when we went from the Japanese school, we used to go see the boat, Japan ships that used to come in. *Asama-maru*, warships, I think. They were practicing maybe.

MK: Oh, you remember that?

MU: Yeah. Because special, we have to have money to go. Then we rode the train all the way to Hilo just to see the ship. The teacher would tell, "You see how hard they working?" They making fire, you know, the sailors. That was a treat.

MK: Oh my goodness. You mentioned Araujo sisters, the teachers. Who were some of your other teachers?

MU: Mr. Ignacio, Mr. Kaya the shop teacher.

MK: What was his name?

MU: Kaya.

MK: Kaya. How about the principal?

MU: Carvalho. They had a cottage right there in the schoolyard. Carvalho, Portuguese, there's most everybody.

MK: What do you remember about your teachers?

MU: I remember when once this teacher, was a special for Christmas, she made chocolate, you know. And it tasted so good, made with milk, I think, or cream or whatever.

MK: How were they as teachers?

MU: They were good. Strict, too.

MK: How strict were they? What did they do?

MU: You had to know all your math.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

- MK: We were just talking about the teachers at Kalaniana'ole School, you said they were strict. How strict were they?
- MU: Oh, you had to memorize this or memorize that. Lots of memorizing to do.
- MK: How was their discipline? If you didn't pay attention to them, what would happen?
- MU: Nothing much. They were just family friend. I think, we didn't have too much outsiders. I only know this Portuguese. Araujo, the last name was Araujo. Emma, and Martha, and Margaret, too, maybe (chuckles). That's how I got the name.
- MK: How did you get your name "Margaret"?
- MU: That's the name that I liked, maybe. And once I remember our teacher that came from Honolulu. She was in sports mostly. That was little different.
- MK: What kind of sports was she into?
- MU: Baseball and volleyball, you know. Team kind.
- MK: What did you like most about school?
- MU: The holidays.
- (Laughter)
- MK: What did you folks do on holidays?
- MU: Had games—not games, but plays at the auditorium and singing. I remember when my brother played his harmonica. "Midnight Clear," what's that?
- MK: "[It Came Up]on a Midnight Clear" Yeah.
- MU: That one. He was so good that I can't forget that.
- MK: So you folks had special programs on holidays like Christmas . . .
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: . . . or Thanksgiving or . . .
- MU: Not much Thanksgiving, but Christmas. Not Easter.
- MK: What did you like the least? What didn't you like?
- MU: I hate? No. (Laughs) I liked everything. Every day was like a holiday to me. I was happy with all the friends and any kind teachers, and even at school and even at home, it was a nice place. I wish we could go back again.
- MK: And then you mentioned that you also went to *Nihongo-gakkō*, Tahara *Gakkō*. Where was Tahara *Gakkō*?

- MU: Right next to the Kalaniana'ole. We used to slide down the bank and then go climb up again to the Tahara. And then, next would be *otera gakkō*. *Otera*, so they had, too, and the school. Was all open, even we could go and play around—go in the kitchen, do anything you like (chuckles). It was all so friendly, everybody, teachers. No more such thing as gate or anything, was all open for you. Even for the Tahara kids.
- MK: And then, the Tahara *Gakkō*, what did they teach over there?
- MU: They were so good with all the *mukashi no*, so I so good with the Tokugawa, Meiji, and Genji.
- MK: So they taught you history, Japanese history.
- MU: That was a must for the teacher. Maybe he was some [descendant] of samurai, too, that's what I think.
- MK: How about *yomikaki*? Did you folks . . .
- MU: Yeah, we did a lot. *Shūshin*.
- MK: What did you learn in *shūshin*?
- MU: How to behave and be good to the teacher, or your parents. Oh, they stressed that very much, *shūshin*, which I thought was very good.
- MK: So, *oyakōkō*?
- MU: Yeah. Only thing that was one dollar a month, which we had hard time to pay the *gessha*.
- MK: In those days, how many of the kids in your family went to the *Nihongo-gakkō*?
- MU: Just the three of us. My brother was younger. I had two older brothers with me. We had a difficult time paying. I know my father used to go around borrowing money.
- MK: So in those days, where would your father go borrow money from?
- MU: From this cousin's family that made money with the sugar harvesting or whatever.
- MK: Oh, so the cousin's family did *ukekibi*?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: What did you think about Japanese school? Some nisei they say they liked Japanese school, some say they didn't like Japanese school.
- MU: I like because I like the story (chuckles). Oh, I can never forget, even to this day. I wish I didn't get rid of my Japanese books during the war.
- MK: This *gakkō* was called Tahara *gakkō*. Who was Tahara?
- MU: The *kōchō sensei* was Tahara, Mr. Tahara and Mrs. [Tahara]. In fact, during the war, they got interned. Before they went, they had a shop on Vineyard Street, bookstore.

There was also a hospital, too, in Pāpa'ikou.

MK: Who ran the hospital?

MU: I don't know who ran, but I know there was. I forgot the name. It was way up high by John T. Moir's home.

MK: Was it plantation hospital or private?

MU: Private yeah. Kaneko.

MK: Kaneko. So, in those days, if somebody got sick, where would they go for treatment?

MU: We would go to Pepe'ekeo where they had plantation hospital in Pepe'ekeo, Dr. Kay. For injection or maternity, *hōsō*. *Hōsō* is vaccination. That's where we went, to Pepe'ekeo.

MK: What did you think about going to visit the doctor at Pepe'ekeo?

MU: It wasn't anything special. It was good. Didn't help much.

(Laughter)

MK: You know, at Tahara *gakkō*, were there Saturday classes, too, or just Monday through Friday?

MU: No, Saturday, too.

MK: So, Saturday, what did you folks learn?

MU: Same thing, continue whatever.

MK: Because you're going Kalaniana'ole School then Tahara-*gakkō* . . .

MU: Afterwards.

MK: . . . what time would you folks get home?

MU: So we'll be late, and many times the bus broke down and we have to eat something. We don't have money to buy because Kalaoa was the only stopping place where we can buy. In between that, don't have, so I guess we starve or whatever.

MK: So those days, when there was school you just got Kalaniana'ole School, then you go Tahara *gakkō* . . .

MU: Afterwards.

MK: . . . and then home.

MU: Yeah, back.

MK: I was wondering, those days, what kind of chores did you have?

MU: Not much.

MK: Inside the house, or outside of the house?

MU: Like with me, I had to wash clothes weekends, or help with the washing. I don't know what—oh, they had to go to the field with my father for *hō hana* or whatever. We had our own field near the house. We all went, the family, make *bentō* and go. Go down the river, and catch the tadpole and kill.

MK: When you went in the field, what kind of work did you do?

MU: *Hō hana*. But I cut the cane more than the weeds (laughs).

MK: That field that the family went to work on, that's your *ukeoishi*.

MU: Yeah, then when we cut, we had the money. No more labor, so only the kids we did the job, which wasn't much.

MK: When you're a kid, you don't know how much money your parents are making, but what did you think? Did you think your parents were doing okay or . . . ?

MU: No. We always didn't have money, Michi-san. We were always poor. The only thing was, after they cut the cane, everything went to the plantation store, I think, so no more. We borrow from the store. It's a wonder we had pencils, and paper to write, tablet.

MK: What did you parents think about *gakumon*, education? What did they think?

MU: They wanted us to do well. Even when we came out here, we thought we were going to high school and all, which didn't happen.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: We were just saying that your family moved to O'ahu, yeah?

MU: Yeah.

MK: They moved in 1929. How come they moved to O'ahu?

MU: Because my brother folks had three kids, and they wanted me to take care, help out with my nieces and nephew. They had *toshi-go*, my big brother. So, they said, same time, they wanted my brothers to go to school over here.

MK: So, the whole family?

MU: No, just the three. Two brothers and myself, not the whole family, we came.

MK: How did you folks manage coming? That took money to . . .

MU: The boat?

MK: Yeah.

- MU: I don't know how they had the money. Borrow, I guess, again. At that time, the two Teruya brothers were on the boat, too. *Hualālai*, *Wai'ale'ale*, or something, that boat name. The one that get cattle underneath and then we stay out on top.
- MK: How was your boat ride?
- MU: I was sick. Throw up (chuckles).
- MK: How did you feel about leaving your parents and . . .
- MU: Friends, yeah.
- MK: How did you feel?
- MU: School is the one that we miss the most. But anyway, my brother was waiting for us at the dock. Did you know we lived on Hobron Lane when we came Waikīkī.
- MK: What was the name of this brother that asked you folks to come?
- MU: Oh, Keikyu. Harry Keikyu, the one that I said lobbies for seniors. He used to work at Waikīkī Tavern.
- MK: When you first came to Honolulu, your brother's there at the dock, and then he brings you into Honolulu. What did you think?
- MU: Sad, so lonely. When we went to Waikīkī he introduced, "This is my sister, and this my brother." People there was tourists mostly. Waikīkī Tavern was kind of a high-class restaurant in Waikīkī beach. When they said, "How do you do?" I didn't know what to say. I know "How are you?" I can say, "Fine, thank you." "How do you do?" Oh, my brother say, "You cannot talk. You so dark I think you go Kamehameha School." I thought was a good school, Kamehameha for Hawaiians. But what he meant was, I was so dark coming from Big Island, you know, you running around in the sun all day long. You dark as can be.
- MK: So your older brother was working at . . .
- MU: Waikīkī Tavern there.
- MK: . . . Waikīkī Tavern. What kind of restaurant was that?
- MU: That was a beach where the tourists go. He started the fountain there where they made banana split and stuff like that, fancy kind, where the tourists go. Was right on the beach.
- MK: How did your brother get that job at Waikīkī Tavern?
- MU: He was working American Café before that.
- MK: So he worked American Café?
- MU: Yeah, before that.
- MK: So he had some experience.

- MU: Yeah. Another thing, he knew Mr. Kobayashi, who's that Bert Kobayashi's father, who was a chef in that place.
- MK: Waikīkī Tavern?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: And this Bert Kobayashi is the attorney?
- MU: Yeah. That's the father. They used to have a restaurant, too. The father used to run a restaurant.
- MK: Oh, I didn't know that. So your brother knew Mr. Kobayashi who also worked at Waikīkī Tavern?
- MU: Yeah, he was the chef.
- MK: And then, your brother, he knew how to make fountain things like sundaes and . . .
- MU: I guess as he went along, he learned.
- MK: And that time, did Keikyu know how to cook, too?
- MU: No, I don't think so. He was just this fountain boy.
- MK: And you said you lived on Hobron Lane. What did your house on Hobron Lane look like?
- MU: Old shack.
- MK: How did it compare with your house in Pāpa'ikou?
- MU: No comparison. This was a old, old house. Magoon house. Magoon used to have several low-income houses to make money, I think. Jack Magoon or whoever, Magoon brothers.
- MK: So how big was this house?
- MU: Not too big, ordinary cottage, brown town house.
- MK: Who lived over there? Your family?
- MU: Yeah. Only our family. Later on my mom and dad came, my mother came, but was this Keikyu's family, his wife and the kids, and we were there, too.
- MK: How about the neighborhood? Who else lived in the neighborhood, Hobron Lane area?
- MU: The Smile Café, [Sam and Masaji] Uyehara, was around there, and the Kitagawa ice man.
- MK: How about other ethnic groups? Hawaiians or Portuguese or Chinese in there?
- MU: The Paoas used to live there, too. I know used to go swimming a lot.
- MK: Paoa family. What did you think about this new place you're living in?

- MU: You know who used to always walk by? The Mirikitani's, used to go McKinley, walk past my house. They were all so well dressed. Well-educated sisters [of] Percy [Mirikitani]. From around there, they used to go back and forth.
- MK: So what did you think about Waikīkī compared to Pāpa'ikou?
- MU: Didn't think anything special. I rather have country, I was always thinking the best place, especially after I went to Washington Intermediate. I went to Washington Intermediate after Lunalilo School. And they used to be what you call cadet teachers from [the] University.
- MK: You said Gertrude Kadota.
- MU: And then, you know Nina Bowman?
- MK: Yeah.
- MU: She was May [Day] queen. All those people used to teach. Bert Itoga used to be the coach for the boys football. You know who's Bert Itoga?
- MK: Those days, what did you think about Washington Intermediate School? You came from Kalaniana'ole and you went to a city school.
- MU: Was so surprising because at that time they had football games, intermediate kind, Kalākaua, Central, Lili'uokalani, Washington. So we used to go, "Rah, rah, rah." (chuckles).
- MK: Where did you folks have the games?
- MU: [Honolulu] Stadium. The old stadium. And then, Japanese school teacher will say, "Oh, Takara-san, *Doko itta no?*" (Laughs) And then, everybody call her Mito Komon because her name was. . . . Mito Komon is what?
- MK: Gee, I don't know.
- MU: Her name was same as . . .
- MK: The same as the Mito Komon? [Tokugawa Mitsukuni]?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: So those days, when you came you went Washington Intermediate and you went Japanese school?
- MU: Yeah, afterward.
- MK: Which Japanese school?
- MU: McCully.
- MK: McCully *Nihongo gakkō*.
- MU: Yeah.

- MK: And so, at Washington, what did you study?
- MU: Miss Kadota used to be math teacher, specialist. And Nina [Bowman]—oh, we used to sing Hawaiian song, which I liked.
- MK: How about your brothers, did they go to school, too?
- MU: No. They worked Waikīkī Tavern because my brothers needed fountain boy. They started to work there.
- MK: What were your brothers' names, the ones that started working?
- MU: Thomas Masao is the number second boy. Then Henry Masanobu, he went into insurance.
- MK: But those two brothers worked at Waikīkī Tavern with the older one, Keikyu.
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: And then, I know that you went to Washington Intermediate, seventh grade, maybe eighth grade, and then you had to quit. How come?
- MU: Didn't have money to send. Needed money that time. I'm not so sure, but I know I didn't have lunch money. The only thing I used to buy was nickel Butterfinger (chuckles). It's so precious to me, even now.
- MK: So, financially, was hard then, for you to go to school.
- MU: Hard time, yeah. So, I had to help a lot, I think, because had good tips. You used to wait on the cars with kimono on, too. This friend of Mr. Kobayashi, his name was Nagai. He had two sons and two daughters. They went to Japan already, but he started this drive-in. First it was from Mr. Christiansen, who had that hot dog place.
- MK: So there was a Mr. Christiansen who owned a hot dog place in Waikīkī?
- MU: No, Kalākaua Avenue where the Asatos had.
- MK: Oh, KC Drive-In.
- MU: Yeah, KC Drive-In. He had the two place, but one of that place in Waikīkī, Bluebird Café, he sold to this Mr. Nagai, who was my brother's friend, so they hired me.
- MK: What was your job over there?
- MU: Serve on the cart, on the tray. You know, you would hook . . .
- MK: Car hop?
- MU: Yeah. And then we carry this long tray right across, too. You should see, all the interesting people I used to know. I used to see Nadine and Duke Kahanamoku. All the hot dog and root beer, oh, was so good fun. There used to be one Japanese boy from Punahou, who's that? Dillingham children used to come. You know, there used to be

dance at Wai'ālae Country Club, and afterwards, they come to the drive-in. Good place to hide, yeah, in the car.

(Laughter)

And then, Fridays would be navy day, when the navy officers in the nice white suit with the hat come with the society girls, all those beautiful people.

MK: They would come.

MU: All society. I was special waitress to them, to lots of people. Because I know what they want. I enjoyed the life, being a waitress.

MK: So you were a car hop waitress at Bluebird Café. And then this Bluebird Café, where was it located?

MU: Kūhiō Theatre, this side, backside. On Kalākaua Avenue.

MK: This job, what did you have to do? You . . .

MU: Serve to the car.

MK: So the car drives up, the customer gives the order, and you write it down or you just go?

MU: No, you just go back and order. Many times, I would remember what they want as they were coming in, I order (chuckles). That's a big favor, too, to know what they want.

MK: You know their orders already, when they drive in?

MU: Yeah. How they wanted . . .

MK: So you'd put in the order, and then . . .

MU: Serve to them, collect the money, come back and pay. There's always a tip.

MK: In those days, what was the tip like? How much would they give you?

MU: All depends. Duke Kahanamoku won't give anything.

(Laughter)

Too poor, that's how I know. In fact, even the Kenneth Brown, the Browns, they used to come with the society girls from Mānoa or from the Mainland. The Paul Fagans, you know them?

MK: Yeah, the Fagan family. So, many upper-class local people used to go to Bluebird Café?

MU: Yeah.

MK: So you had upper-class local young people, you had the navy men coming, how about regular local people?

- MU: Not much. I think you have to have a car. They didn't own any car, not much. Only some playful Japanese men, maybe, would come around (chuckles), stick around. It didn't matter to me, I was too young.
- MK: So many came like on dates, then.
- MU: Yeah. Oh, yeah, that's right, dates. And then, they'll park in the back where it's dark so nobody can see. They hiding from the wife or whoever (chuckles).
- MK: How big was the parking lot? How many cars?
- MU: Big. Right through from the front. It was well made.
- MK: How many cars did you have to service?
- MU: Lots, I don't know how many.
- MK: How many girls worked with you?
- MU: Three or four at the time.
- MK: And you were saying, what did you have to wear?
- MU: Kimono. Oh, I should show you.
- MK: Hold on to this, and then later on you can show me. But you had to wear kimono.
- MU: Yeah. You can see *bumbai*.
- MK: Who would put the kimono on you?
- MU: Later on, I learned to put on myself, but neighbor lady used to put.
- MK: What were your hours?
- MU: We start maybe about five or six, because it's always dark when I start going. And then we finish two o'clock.
- MK: So how would you go and come home?
- MU: They bring us home. Going, we walked down Smile Café, and go down Barbecue Inn, past that Lau Yee Chai, then the Bluebird.
- MK: I saw one of your pictures, and you looked so cute in your kimono. The other girls were . . .
- MU: The same.
- MK: They were young and all . . .
- MU: Yeah, all about the same, and we used to sing a lot. (Telephone rings.) Japanese songs.

- MK: Who were some of the other people who worked at Bluebird Café? You were a waitress car hop, who else worked there?
- MU: Mildred Murakami and Nora. . . . I forgot her last name, she's married already. Anyway, we were all close and we sing. And then, the son, owner, takes us home, everybody. We always tell him, "We like eat *saimin*, we like go there." Afterwards we go downtown driving around looking for place that's open to eat. (MK laughs.) Yeah. Was good.
- MK: Was nice, pretty nice, then, yeah? Who else worked there? You have the young girls who were the waitress car hops, and then, who were the cooks and the manager?
- MU: They had hired help. Some from the school or, you know, they quit school or something.
- MK: Did any of the cooks over there open up their own restaurant later on?
- MU: No.
- MK: And what kind of food did they serve?
- MU: Hamburger. All the malts, milkshakes, ice cream sodas, some fountain. Hamburger, grilled-cheese sandwich. All that kind, sandwiches.
- MK: So, no local food then.
- MU: Didn't have plate lunch or anything like that.
- MK: American.
- MU: No rice, only French fries and sandwiches.
- MK: How was your pay?
- MU: Oh, cheap pay, but the tips added up. You know what they used to like? Chili with crackers, not with rice. Chili in this kind.
- MK: Their best sellers were what?
- MU: Hamburgers.
- MK: What did you folks eat over there when you folks ate there?
- MU: Same, egg sandwich, or hamburgers. Their hamburgers were different, you know. He would put lettuce and relish, chop up onion, and then maybe mayonnaise. The meat by itself is not mixed with onion, it's a plain meat. Used to come from Downtown meat market. It was straight ground round.
- MK: With onions?
- MU: No, nothing. Not mixed. The thing, he put separate. That's the best part, I think, he was famous for.
- MK: That is different, yeah?

MU: So I tried to copy.

MK: Did you try copy that when you folks had restaurant?

MU: Yeah, we did. But we always ended up mixing because get hamburger steak like that, you have to.

MK: So from that time, when you worked Bluebird Café, like you learned about the hamburger and later when you opened you copied. Were there other things you learned over there that you copied when you opened up your own restaurant?

MU: Yeah, maybe the spaghetti.

MK: How was his spaghetti?

MU: His spaghetti was on this kind of dish, and then he used to serve bread, toasted bun. That was famous. He grill it on the grill, the bun toasted. Toasted bun used to taste so good with all the butter on it. That's what I learned.

MK: Okay. Wait now.

(Taping stops, then resumes).

MK: So, you were saying that from the Bluebird Café time, you learned about the hamburger and the spaghetti with the grilled . . .

MU: Buns.

MK: Bread—buns. Were there any other things that you learned over there that you kind of continued?

MU: Not much. But the fountain drinks, maybe. Thick malt, milkshakes, they used to specialize in that. We did over here, too, and they liked it.

MK: Because you were a waitress and you worked with the customers, were there things that you learned over there that you tried to teach your workers or you tried to continue when you opened later on?

MU: No, not much. They did their own things.

MK: I was wondering, when you were a waitress, were there things that you really enjoyed about the job? What did you enjoy about being a waitress?

MU: Knowing the customer, who they were. Putting two and two together, and they pretty big up there.

MK: What didn't you like?

MU: Not much.

MK: It was okay?

MU: Yeah. Was good life.

- MK: Who was your boss, the one who would be your supervisor?
- MU: That Nagai. They went to Japan. They made money and went Japan, I think, for education.
- MK: You mentioned that when you would go to work you would walk past like Lau Yee Chai, and Barbecue Inn, Smile Café, what other eating places were there nearby?
- MU: Used to be this milkshake place on Kalākaua [Avenue].
- MK: Milkshake place, and who were like the competitors to Bluebird Café?
- MU: Oh, the Purity Inn used to be owned by Dairymen's. Used to be a fountain, too. And across the street had Hollister's with a fountain.
- MK: Why did people come to Bluebird Café? You have these competitors.
- MU: I think it was easy to get in the car, coming from Downtown or wherever. They used to come mostly from Mānoa, you know, and then can just go in.
- MK: So the location was good.
- MU: Yeah, 'Olohana Street.
- MK: 'Olohana Street. Did you ever think about going to work someplace else?
- MU: No. They were just like family already, we became.
- MK: I know that you worked there until you married in 1937, so was that the reason that you stopped working Bluebird?
- MU: I had to prepare, go sewing, and all kinds to get married.
- MK: Today I'm going to stop over here, and the next time I come, I'm going to continue with your marriage and your restaurant. Okay?
- MU: Oh, New Capitol? Yeah, okay.
- MK: Okay, I'm going to stop over here.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 40-5-2-02

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Margaret Uyehara (MU)

Kaimukī, O'ahu

July 11, 2002

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Margaret Umeno Takara Uyehara at her home in Kaimukī, O'ahu on July 11, 2002. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, so Mrs. Uyehara, we're going to continue with the interview, and I'm going to ask you questions about the time you were still at the Bluebird Café. First of all, I know there's a Bluebird Café and a Bluebird Drive-In. What was the name of the place you worked at?

MU: Was a drive-in at first and then later on when my brother took over, it was a café. It was a drive-in with the tray, car service, where all the rich Mānoa people use to hang around, the young kids from school.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Okay, we were talking about the Bluebird . . .

MU: Was a drive-in at first.

MK: And then later on it became a café.

MU: Café, yeah.

MK: Okay, and who owned the café when you worked there?

MU: The drive-in, Mr. Nagai, Kamitaro Nagai. The whole family left for Japan after.

MK: Mr. Nagai was the owner?

MU: Yes.

MK: Was there a manager?

MU: His sons. He had two boys that worked there with us.

MK: What were their names?

MU: Sadao and Nobuyoshi.

- MK: I know that you were like a car service waitress. Who were the others that worked over there?
- MU: They were same. Oh, the names? There used to be a Nora and then Mitsuko Aoki that worked together. Also, Mildred Fujie Murakami from Kona.
- MK: So there were four girls that worked.
- MU: Yes.
- MK: Were there any boys that also worked there?
- MU: Used to be a fry cook, the son used to fry cook, cashier, and everything, manager sort of.
- MK: I was wondering, during those days in the 1930s, how was Bluebird doing?
- MU: They were doing really well. They used to have dance at Moana Hotel and then Wai'ala'e Golf [Country] Club. We used to take all the crowds from there. They had fountain service. . . . I remember pretty well-known people that used to come around, even Duke Kahanamoku with Nadine. Their favorite was hot dog with root beer. (Chuckles)
- MK: What were some of the other specials that people ordered? Like the Kahanamokus liked the hot dog with root beer.
- MU: Milkshake, malts, hamburger. Grilled-cheese sandwich. All the sandwiches—clubhouse, bacon-tomato, all fancy sandwiches—and fountain drinks. The idea was that they drove nice car, show off, didn't have to get off the car (chuckles).
- MK: So car-hop service.
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: I know that in 1937 you married Herbert Seichi Uyehara. How did you folks meet and get married?
- MU: It was introduced by my aunt which is his aunt also. Thirty-seven was the year that Great Britain's crown prince, Prince Edward, gave up his throne to marry [Wallis] Simpson. 1937, that's the year I got married.
- MK: So when your aunt arranged the marriage, what did you think?
- MU: My family said, "He's a good catch (chuckles), you lucky you have an aunt to arrange for you." They made it as though he was such a good guy. He was, Michi. Good catch of those days. He was athletic, good-looking, nice family. Only thing, they used to raise pigs, which I knew I had to help.
- MK: So where was his family raising pigs?
- MU: At Kalihi Valley on Kam[ehameha] IV Road.
- MK: When the decision was made to get married, where did you folks get married?
- MU: At Izumo Taisha on King Street. Izumo used to be on King Street before.

MK: So it was a Shintō ceremony?

MU: Yeah, yeah.

MK: In those days, where did you have your reception?

MU: At home. Before I left the house for Kalihi, we had small little party with my friends, working friends. When the car came, they had *chōchin* hanging. Those days, they used to put *chōchin* on the bridal car. All the way to Kam IV Road, we went. He came to pick me up.

For hours I had to sit down and how many times I had to change clothes, about three or four times back and forth. From the *montsuki* to *homongi*, *furisode* or whatever, *no*. Boy, that's hectic. I don't want kids to be doing that. Lucky.

MK: In those days, when you had your reception, it was at home?

MU: Yeah.

MK: What kinds of food were prepared?

MU: All kinds. They were good in cooking all kinds. Chop suey, chicken, pork, of course, since they had piggery. And then, the big pot of pork soup, for days they would come and help clean up, and kept on eating. The neighbors, relatives, all helped. Some they stayed over to sleep, to help out.

MK: When you folks got married, how involved were the Oroku *Aza-jin* people?

MU: Not too much, but mostly they were [Oroku] *Aza-jin* people.

MK: When you folks first got married, where did you folks live?

MU: Live with them in that same house.

MK: In Kalihi Valley?

MU: Yeah, same place.

MK: What did you folks do for a living?

MU: He worked at the weekends at our restaurant, Hibiscus Café on Beretania Street and Nu'uānu [Avenue], I think.

MK: That Hibiscus Café, who owned that one?

MU: That's the [Saburo] Teruya, too, Oroku person.

MK: And your husband, what kind of work did he do at the Hibiscus?

MU: He used to wait on tables.

MK: So his family had . . .

MU: Piggery.

MK: . . . a pig farm, and then he worked at the Hibiscus restaurant for the Teruyas, and he was a waiter?

MU: Yeah.

MK: What did he say about his job at the Hibiscus restaurant?

MU: Not much, but he always wanted to have his own house, move out. But, being a first son, you don't do that for my part. And you know, Michi, what was interesting, their friends would come sometimes, visit from Kohala. Mother will go into the chicken coop looking for chicken to make chicken soup, from even eight o'clock at night. She says to put on hot water, we going make chicken soup for them. They won't let them go home without at least sitting down, eating a meal, even from eight o'clock at night.

MK: Just really hospitable, yeah?

MU: Yeah, they were very special people. The father and mother both. Which frightened me, I never caught live chicken (chuckles) or cut the neck.

MK: Did you learn how to?

MU: Yeah, later on, I came smart.

(Laughter)

MK: In the beginning, you lived with your . . .

MU: Family, yeah.

MK: . . . in-laws in Kalihi.

MU: Two married sisters, neighbor. Had two sisters and a brother living all together. Cooking for them, and washing dishes, wash clothes.

MK: Because it was a pig farm, what did you have to do on the farm to help out?

MU: Carry two cans and feed, and wash the pen.

MK: Because you came from the Big Island, how much of an adjustment was it for you to work on the farm?

MU: Plenty.

MK: What did you have to learn that you didn't know how to do before?

MU: Cooking. I never did any cooking because I had sister-in-law.

MK: So you had to learn how to cook.

MU: Cook, yeah.

- MK: In those days, what kind of cooking did you learn?
- MU: Cooking stir-fry food. And my husband used to love fried eggplant. Peddler used to sell fish, *akule*, she used to come to sell. So, we had plenty food.
- MK: About how long did you folks live together in Kalihi?
- MU: Quite a while because '39, my first daughter was born. So it must be around '38, we started the restaurant. We move out over here, I think.
- MK: So, you lived with your in-laws in Kalihi, helped with the pig farm, your husband was working Hibiscus restaurant. And then I think you also said that you helped at American Café.
- MU: Yeah. To earn spending money to, you know.
- MK: How did you get the job at American Café?
- MU: Because this family moved from Honoka'a, and she wanted a job, this girl, Akamine, the name. So taking her along, we went together to the job, American Café, to work.
- MK: How come you went to American Café?
- MU: Because I had a brother-in-law that was a cousin to Mr. Takara, and he was a cook there. He said, yeah, they need waitress.
- MK: What was that cousin's name?
- MU: Ushinosuke Takara.
- MK: When you went to American Café, who were working there already when you started?
- MU: The cook, Kotaro was his name. That's about all I know, the cook.
- MK: And then the Akamine girl.
- MU: Working with me, yeah. And Mrs. Takara was waitress, too, with us.
- MK: Those days, what kinds of food did American Café serve?
- MU: Cutlet, hash, fish sometimes, turtle steak. You ever heard of turtle steak? It looks like veal cutlet with gravy on top.
- MK: In addition to the entrées, what else did they get?
- MU: Cocktail or soup, a drink, and bread, and dessert went with it.
- MK: About how much did these meals cost?
- MU: The lunch used to be thirty-five cents. I think evening would be about fifty-five, but they would add steak or something, pork chop.

- MK: At American Café, how about smaller foods like sandwiches or salads or soups? Were those offered, too?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: What meals did they serve? Is it . . .
- MU: Breakfast, lunch, dinner, too.
- MK: How about the hours?
- MU: Breakfast was early, lunch was lunchtime, and dinner, I don't know. They used to close—because of the liquor they had—they used to close about one-thirty [A.M.], maybe. We don't work that late. We only for lunch hour, women.
- MK: Oh, so the other hours?
- MU: Somebody else was working some other shift.
- MK: And this American Café, about how many tables did it have?
- MU: Let's see. There was a big table in the back called the Democrat, table where the Democrat people used to meeting. And then, three kind of big tables on the side.
- MK: How about in the other part? You have the big table in the back, how about in the front part?
- MU: They had small little booths, the front. And later on, he made even upstairs sort of on top, the Democrat table people.
- MK: When you think about it, about how many customers would he have usually lunchtime?
- MU: Maybe good, over fifteen, sixteen, like that. Not only that, there was a Young Laundry next door, where the workers would buy the lunch and go around in the back. He had the big table in the back, back room, where the workers would sit down and rest. But all the laundry workers used to sit down over there to eat their lunch.
- MK: So the laundry workers would come by and then eat the lunches that they bought over there?
- MU: Yeah, in the back. Not in the dining room, in the back.
- MK: What kind of customers did he have? He had the laundry workers that would come, who else used to come?
- MU: *Haole* office workers from across the street, or around. Bishop Street used to have businesses, and from the Gump's, or wherever around there.
- MK: You were telling me around there you had Gump's, what else was around American Café?
- MU: Across the street was this—T[heo].H. Davies, I think, where the A&W had lunch counter. And Alakea Street had Alakea Grill run by Mr. Takushi.

- MK: Were there other competing restaurants in the area?
- MU: Yeah, something diner around the corner across from Alakea. And upside, had Shiro's.
- MK: And then when you compare American Café with the other places, how were they doing?
- MU: They were doing pretty good. You know, Michi, the best place to eat was across from that Queen Theatre. City Grill, that was a popular eating place by Liberty House. City Grill, the name.
- MK: What was so good about City Grill?
- MU: I don't know what, but that was a popular place. We liked to look around, busy time, go and check on other people.
- MK: American Café, how did it attract customers?
- MU: They old-timers. They were there for years and years. All the people from Japan that went to Big Island, when they came to Honolulu, they all went to Takara-san's to *minarai* and wash dish, or learn to talk or where to go. Most everybody, [Taro and Jiro Teruya] Beretania Café, Columbia Inn, Gentaro-san [Gentaro Kaneshiro], all those people started from there.
- MK: When you say, "*minarai*," what is *minarai*?
- MU: Practice.
- MK: So when they came from the Big Island or outside, they worked for Mr. Takara?
- MU: Yeah. To learn there.
- MK: Were they paid while they worked over there?
- MU: Usually, I think they just help out, or maybe little bit *kozukai* or what, I don't know, could be.
- MK: He had many customers, how did he get all these customers?
- MU: From mouth.
- MK: Word of mouth?
- MU: Yeah. You know what made busy, too? Sometimes they had boat days when the sailors would come out and make them busy, too.
- MK: So those days you had to work hard.
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: What were the most popular dishes when you were waitressing?
- MU: Tripe stew. They made good tripe stew, I think, because everybody used to rave about it.

MK: And so, like their tripe stew, how much did that cost?

MU: Would be in the club lunch, they called it.

MK: How much would that cost?

MU: With everything, thirty-five cents or something like that.

MK: In those days, how much would you get as a tip when you were waitressing at American Café?

MU: Good if you get ninety-cents or dollar. About there.

MK: And your pay those days, was about how much?

MU: Thirty-five to forty dollars. The good girls, we used to pay fifty-five.

MK: At American Café?

MU: No, at our own. So, would be same with American Café, too. Would be.

MK: I see. And in those days, you were saying that you worked lunchtime. So about how many hours did you work at American Café?

MU: Maybe we start from eleven [A.M.] maybe to one or two [P.M.]. We go 'A'ala Park and play a little while before we went home.

(Laughter)

MK: So, what did you folks do at 'A'ala Park side?

MU: We just talk story, eat peanut, and stuff.

MK: And then go home.

MU: Yeah, yeah. You know, when I was pregnant, I would catch bus Kalihi, and then I would get off on Liliha Street where they had *mochi-ya* on the corner of Liliha and King [Streets]. And buy *yabure manjū*, you know *da kine*. Oh, I used to crave that, and then get on the bus again. I'll go all the way to Akahoshi Drug [Store] by the river. And then, there's a marketplace inside, then you can buy *imo tempura*. I buy that. I can't forget, and to this day I'm so crazy for *imo tempura* and that *manjū*.

(Laughter)

MK: And then you went to work.

MU: Yeah (chuckles). I went to work late. And being pregnant, I would be tired and my husband would tell, "Go YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] go sleep little while." You know you could sleep those days, rest. Other people resting around at the YW[CA], upstairs.

MK: So that was when you folks already owned New Capitol Café.

- MU: Yeah, when we started to . . .
- MK: Before we get into the New Capitol Café, I was wondering when you were waitressing, what did you have to learn to be a waitress at American Café?
- MU: How to carry the dishes one by one, all the way up here.
- MK: Almost up to your shoulder.
- MU: Yeah, plenty dishes. And, you were told to clean up fast. When they not even finish you have to pull out, Mr. Takara-san will tell, then the table will open for the next.
- MK: So as a waitress, you had to take the order, bring the order, and you carry the order, too . . .
- MU: Yeah, and put away, and clean the table, and make ready fast. That's why, even to this day, Wallace and Albert [Teruya] used to make *gasagasa*, you know, even at the market. So used to already, in them, being in a restaurant, rush rush.
- MK: So, this Mr. Ushi Takara, how was he as a boss?
- MU: Strict, but I think he was a smart man up here. He didn't know English, he came from Japan, and how can he run like that?
- MK: You said that people would come and they would *minarai* at his restaurant. How did he teach them?
- MU: They just went in to work.
- MK: So, they learned just by doing.
- MU: Doing, yeah. Get inside.
- MK: And after people would *minarai*, many opened their own businesses, yeah?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: I don't know if you know, but what did Mr. Takara think about other people making and opening businesses?
- MU: I think he was happy for the person, being able to open. He was happy for us. He would pass by and say, "Oh, *kyō ii ka?*" You know if good business or what. We talk stories.
- MK: Did he ever give you folks any advice after you folks opened up?
- MU: No, nothing much.
- MK: But he would come talk story.
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: So, Mr. Takara, how much time would he spend at his restaurant?

MU: Oh, he's there all day long. Never left the place. He always found something.

MK: What was Mr. Takara doing at his restaurant?

MU: Taking away the dishes, or talking to the salesman. "*Takai*. How come this *takai*, and this *takai*?"

(Laughter)

Or going around, looking at other places, too. He used to do that often.

MK: In those days, who decided what was going to be served at the restaurant?

MU: The cook. He would tell It was a scheduled thing, Friday was the fish, Monday start all over again. Or whatever they had plenty, they'll make.

MK: Did he just *makaseru* to the cook?

MU: Yeah. That's right.

MK: So in those days when you were the waitress, who was the cook?

MU: Kotaro. He left for the Mainland.

MK: So Kotaro-*san* never opened up his own place?

MU: No, not his own.

MK: What did you think about the time you spent working at American Café?

MU: Made plenty friends and learned a lot.

MK: I know in 1938, your husband and you started the New Capitol Café, with Kame Uyehara. How did you folks get together with Kame Uyehara to do this?

MU: Kame is related to us. So one day he came over to the house to tell the parents that he wants—my husband was well known for his speed with waiting. He was a good waiter. All over used to want him to come. So Mr. Kame [Uyehara] said, "We want to open," and he never was paid working piggery, so the father gladly put up the money for him for the restaurant.

MK: I see. So your father-in-law helped finance the opening of New Capitol Café [at 210 S. King Street]?

MU: Yeah, with Kame-*san*. At that time, the first worker was Doris Kaneshiro, who opened up Jolly Rogers later on. I had another girl, Evelyn, who's Ethel Teruya's sister, who used to be a good girl, fast and customers, everybody, used to like her. For instance, Mr. John Hara from post office, and lawyer attorney, Chuck Mau and his friend, Michiro Watanabe, who was a lawyer, too. They were good friends, they used to be our regulars. Our lunch used to be something like American Café, about thirty-five cents. But choice of soup or fruit cocktail. And those days, we gave three pieces of bread: raisin, brown, and white. Ice tea or coffee to drink with, and the pie was homemade. We used to go four o'clock in the morning to work, just because my husband always worried about the pie.

MK: Oh.

MU: He made all that. You heard of rhubarb pie?

MK: Yeah.

MU: That, custard, all the lemon chiffon and stuff, coconut cream.

MK: So, the pies . . .

MU: They were homemade. He baked in the morning, early in the morning we go. He always worried about the pie, poor thing.

MK: So, who was the baker for your restaurant?

MU: He did everything, fry cook, cook stew, everything, set up. In fact, when sometimes busy, he'll go out in the front to wait on the table, too.

MK: Your husband did all that?

MU: Cooking, yeah.

MK: Wow.

MU: Of course, he had a helper. Fry cook named Shigeru. There was one good waiter, also, for us, but when he went out fishing he got lost, Wake Island or someplace, he never was found. Nick Shiroma, his name. He was a good worker and we felt sorry for him.

MK: What was your job at . . .

MU: Waiting, cashier, clean up. And it wasn't easy to hire people, too, good worker, you know.

MK: How did you folks find your workers then?

MU: We would call each other, if you need. They come to apply and we have extra. We don't want to refuse, so we call Ramona Café, "You folks want girls? Nice-looking girl." And so did Times Grill, too. That's how we find the girls.

MK: You just said that, "Oh, you want these nice-looking girls?" How important was how they looked?

MU: Because the young guys will hang around.

(Laughter)

MK: So they would come for the food and . . .

MU: Also for girls, too. (MK laughs.) It makes a lot of difference how you treated those days. You have to be kind of good to the customer, too. You have to bend down your head to be good.

MK: And then, this Kame Uyehara, he suggested you folks open the café together.

- MU: Together, yeah.
- MK: What did Kame Uyehara do at the New Capitol Café?
- MU: He was the cook, a good one, too.
- MK: What were some of the things he used to cook?
- MU: Can't remember. Mostly the fried things, like breaded stuff.
- MK: So like cutlets.
- MU: Yeah. Of course there's always stew. Lots of customers' favorite was chop suey. They make from fresh vegetable, all chop up. Make pork chop suey.
- MK: So those days, you have the entrée, the main dish, starch, rice, and then . . .
- MU: The bread.
- MK: Bread, and then hot vegetable?
- MU: Yeah, hot vegetable, too. Gallon can of peas and carrots, used to have. We used to open up.
- MK: And then you had your fruit cocktail.
- MU: Yeah, or soup. Homemade soup, yeah.
- MK: What kind soup did you folks make those days?
- MU: Barley soup or rice soup. Whatever. Vegetable soup, beef broth.
- MK: And then for desserts you folks had?
- MU: The pies, jello, pies.
- MK: You mentioned your husband would be worried about the pies, you had rhubarb pie . . .
- MU: Apple.
- MK: Apple.
- MU: Custard or chiffon.
- MK: So every day he would make all these different pies.
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: So how did your husband know how to bake, though?
- MU: By watching. Mr. Kame Uyehara used to know how. Watching him. In fact, the brother-in-law used to teach, I think.

MK: Oh, okay. And then, this New Capitol Café, what was its address, location?

MU: King and Alakea [Streets].

MK: How come you folks named it New Capitol Café?

MU: Because had that Capitol Lunchroom across the street. Those were the days when they just opened. It had a lunch counter, first lunch counter I saw.

MK: When you folks opened the New Capitol Café, was it from scratch, totally new place, or you folks bought it?

MU: No, we opened a new place. Of course, the building was there next to the Miller and Wassman service station, gas station.

MK: Since it was a new place, what did you have to do to make it ready to be a restaurant?

MU: We had to have the carpenter make tables, chairs, counter, stool.

MK: You folks had counter where people could sit at and eat. You had . . .

MU: Fountain also in there. We didn't use too much, and then tables.

MK: How about booths?

MU: No, didn't have booths, all tables.

MK: So about how many people could fit in your restaurant, New Capitol Café?

MU: Maybe about fifty or sixty about. Oh, we had one booth where the workers sat and ate (chuckles).

MK: And then, you mentioned that you had—how many workers did you have?

MU: Let's see, maybe about four or five waitress. Maybe once in a while, two or three extras would come, stop by. My cousin always came from Waikiki side to help. They just jump in to help. We had two cooks, maybe a dishwasher.

MK: What were your hours of operation?

MU: By four or five o'clock [P.M.], we would go home. So in the morning, it was early. For breakfast, we used to open for those. Those are the days when the defense workers used to come for breakfast and we had to be early. You know where they went after finish? They would go Railway Coffee Shop [Railroad Café, owned by Thomas, Henry, and Fred Takara], my brother's place, to get on the train or bus or wherever they were going. But, they came from Army-Navy Y[MCA, Young Men's Christian Association], they used to stay and those were the busy days, I tell you, Michi.

MK: The defense workers, what would they eat at your place in the morning?

MU: Eggs. The toaster was always going and going.

(Laughter)

MK: The defense workers, would they come eat dinnertime, too?

MU: No, not much.

MK: Just morning time.

MU: Yeah. Maybe Army-Navy Y had kitchen cafeteria or what, I don't know. But morning was busy.

MK: And then, going back to your workers, I was wondering, about how much did you pay your workers? You mentioned maybe thirty-five or fifty-five [dollars] for the waitresses, how about the cooks?

MU: About fifty to sixty dollars, I think, about. Sixty was big pay in those days already.

MK: You folks had to take care of a lot of people.

MU: In fact, once before, one time we didn't have enough money to pay for the wages, we had to borrow from one of the boys, cook.

(Laughter)

My husband just ask, "Oh, you better wait for your pay, going be late this month."

He said, "You like borrow my money?" Just like that because from Hakalau same. I can't forget that, how nice people sometimes.

MK: So, how was business for New Capitol Café? Was it okay most of the time or hard?

MU: Average, no, pretty hard.

MK: Were there any times when you folks thought of even giving up?

MU: Many times, many times.

MK: What did your husband like about the business?

MU: Being on our own, I think. You know, self-employed.

MK: What did he not like about the business?

MU: To get up early in the morning. For that, anytime we closed Michi, we splurged. We went to potluck show at Princess Theatre. You don't know what they going show, it's luck.

MK: Oh!

MU: They had that, Princess Theatre. Not only that, we used to go out to eat often, somebody's food. He'll go to the cook and tell him, "You know my fried chicken? Go cook with plenty garlic inside." We used to go to Chinese place. It was a treat for us just to eat out. Even *udon*, *saimin*, or barbecue meat on a stick, on Beretania Street we used to go. By Iida Store, they used to have in a wagon, yeah. We loved that. You know what he like? *Zenzai*, they used to say.

MK: Where would he go for *zenzai* though?

MU: River Street one where they serve saimin and barbecue meat. It was a treat for us. And we always went to movie to Liliha Theatre, Princess Theatre.

MK: You mentioned that your workers would have a booth where they would have their meals, how about you folks?

MU: We ate . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: So you were saying that the workers and you folks ate at your restaurant. In those days, was the meal for a worker included for free?

MU: That was free. The meals came with it, whatever they ate.

MK: Would they have a choice on what they could eat?

MU: Yeah. Most time, yeah. But they want the good stuff, every time, most everybody. And you know, Michi, we always went to picnic. Once we went all the way to Waimānalo, we forgot the chicken for the *hekka* (laughs). So only the vegetable went.

MK: So that was a . . .

MU: Workers.

MK: . . . restaurant workers' picnic.

MU: Yeah, we did a lot of that.

MK: So picnicking and . . .

MU: And New Year's we'll take them all to the night clubs. Lau Yee Chai, all around town. Wherever the musicians played, we used to follow up and go night clubbing.

MK: So most of the workers that you had, were they friends or relatives or people you didn't know?

MU: No, we just came friends.

MK: And your workers, did they stay? How long?

MU: Stayed all right through, when even we closed. Some *wen* even follow us till over here.

MK: To the Kaimukī business?

MU: Yeah.

MK: Going back to your restaurant, I was wondering, what was your restaurant's most popular dish? What did people like over there so much?

MU: Gee, I don't know, already so long ago.

MK: But you folks had everything. Cutlet, stews, soups.

MU: Yeah, homemade. They used to love the pies, I think, the dessert.

MK: The homemade pies. In those days, who were like your competitors nearby?

MU: Had lots.

MK: And those days, how did you get your customers?

MU: They bring their friends. Word by mouth. Because there were lots, you know. Alakea Street side had Alakea Grill, and in the corner had a diner. Popular place, too. And across the street in the arcade, they had eating place, too. Cheap, too.

MK: So a lot of competition.

MU: Plenty.

MK: I was wondering, during World War II, how was your business affected?

MU: Oh, was so good, I tell you, Michi. We didn't even go to the bank, we just threw inside the safe.

(Laughter)

We didn't even count money.

MK: How come business was so good wartime?

MU: Because they think they going die, so they spend, I guess.

MK: Wartime, who were your customers?

MU: About the same, or even pass-byers and friends.

MK: Wartime, you have like blackout, how did that affect the business?

MU: We didn't open at night, so no need blackout, no need put on the light.

MK: Those days people used to tell us, oh, they had rationing, yeah? How did that affect you folks in getting your supplies?

MU: Was hard, really hard.

(Telephones rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were just telling me about the rationing during World War II made it kind of . . .

MU: Difficult, yeah.

MK: . . . hard for you folks. So how did you folks get your goods for the restaurant?

MU: I don't know, maybe some connection, some. My brother used to go Big Island for pork, and then he used to give us some.

MK: Was that the brother that had Railroad Café?

MU: Yeah, they used to go Big Island often. That's where we came from, so pork is what we got from there, or fish.

MK: How about from your in-law's farm?

MU: Oh yeah, that, too. But not much because you have to take them to the slaughterhouse and all kinds.

MK: How about vegetables, though? Was it easy or hard to get?

MU: No, it wasn't too hard. Used to come from River Street Rancho.

MK: Rancho Produce.

MU: Yeah, you know? Or you hear?

MK: Right, that company, yeah?

MU: Yeah, that's our *da kine*. And market used to have meat, too—O'ahu [Fish] Market. When Chinese market people used to come to buy the pig, they buy the whole one at a time. So they used to supply us with meat, too, meat stuff. That's the friend from O'ahu [Fish] Market.

MK: How about things like butter and flour and . . .

MU: Used to come. Hata used to have all those things, Y. Hata.

MK: Y. Hata [& Co. Ltd.].

MU: Yeah, used to be.

MK: So even during wartime was okay.

MU: Was all right.

MK: During the war, did you change your menu in anyway?

MU: No, not much.

MK: Same?

MU: Mm.

- MK: I was wondering, you stopped New Capitol Café about 1945 when you got the Kaimukī house. How come you folks stopped over there?
- MU: Because we wanted to open over here, the drive-in.
- MK: How come you folks wanted to open over here in Kaimukī?
- MU: No, because the house was close by. We moved over there first.
- MK: So you opened the Capitol Drive-In at Waikīkī and Sixth?
- MU: No, not Waikīkī, Wai‘alae . . .
- MK: Ah, Wai‘alae and Sixth [avenues], because you bought your house over here.
- MU: To be close.
- MK: Oh, okay. And, how did you folks find that place?
- MU: Because his friend is real estate man, Chuck Shima. He’s Bonded Realty [Company], you heard of that? He made the building over there. The whole thing was split up and the corner was for us to open drive-in. That *Kodomōya* had stalls in the different stores. *Kodomōya*.
- MK: That Japanese toy shop, huh?
- MU: Yeah, yeah.
- MK: So, through the realtor friend, you folks opened over there. And there was a whole section just for you folks.
- MU: One corner where that Toyota [dealership] now. You know that Toyota? All the space over there was car service for us.
- MK: You closed New Capitol Café and then you opened Capitol Drive-In at Wai‘alae and Sixth [avenues] where the Toyota Company is now.
- MU: Yeah, it was car service.
- MK: So drive-in with car service?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: How did you folks manage to open over there, finance and everything?
- MU: Somehow we did. We gave the downtown one to our brother-in-law.
- MK: Oh. And what was your brother-in-law’s name?
- MU: Uyehara, too.
- MK: So your brother-in-law bought the New Capitol Café . . .

MU: Yeah.

MK: . . . and then you folks opened up the Capitol Drive-In?

MU: Drive-In, yeah.

MK: What were the main things that you folks sold at Capitol Drive-In?

MU: Hamburger, like any drive-in. And saimin. Pork sandwich was a favorite of all the people around there. Pork made with gravy, pork sandwich.

MK: So that was . . .

MU: Called the barbecue pork sandwich, but it was only gravy.

(Laughter)

MK: How did you folks figure out how to make that sandwich?

MU: When he boiled the saimin, the saimin stock was made from *da kine* and *kai, ebi* from Hata, he made gravy out of that, too. It made good gravy, from all the drippings from the roast, and all put together, strain. He made '*ono* '*ono* gravy from that for the pork sandwich. The pork was a big Boston butt that he boil for the *dashi* for saimin.

MK: Oh, sounds so good.

(Laughter)

MU: It was good, I tell you. Cannot find that kind nowadays.

MK: So pork sandwich with gravy . . .

MU: On the bun, yeah.

MK: On the bun, that's one of the real popular . . .

MU: Things, yeah. Oh yeah.

MK: So pork sandwich, you have hamburgers, what else did you folks have?

MU: Saimin.

MK: Saimin. How about the noodles for the saimin?

MU: The noodles came from—what you call that street? All the way up, by Kuakini.

MK: Oh, Liliha Saimin?

MU: Yeah, they brought a tray full of saimin all the time and we used to roll 'em up into one bundle. That's where it came from. Liliha Saimin, that's right.

MK: At that time, did you folks have like plate lunches?

MU: No, but they used to come, so we used to make a lot. Did you know that he used to make veal cutlet from filet mignon?

MK: Oh, my goodness.

MU: Tenderloin steak.

MK: So, you folks did serve . . .

MU: Meals, yeah.

MK: . . . meal.

MU: Yeah.

MK: What did you folks serve it in? Nowadays it's paper plates.

MU: Paper plates, yeah.

MK: How about that time?

MU: Yeah, paper plate, too. We had.

MK: So your menu included sandwiches, burgers, saimin . . .

MU: And meals.

MK: And meals?

MU: Yeah. He was good making spaghetti. 'Ono 'ono food he made.

MK: How about the drinks?

MU: Fountain, we had this kind. Did you know Coke came like this? And the soda, ice cream soda, milkshake. We had shave ice-machine, too. (Chuckles)

MK: You folks had all kinds.

MU: All kinds, yeah, because across the street is school, Sacred Hearts [Academy].

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: You were saying that you had Sacred Hearts.

MU: Across, yeah, and Saint Louis [High School students] used to hang around because of the girls.

(Laughter)

MK: So, those days, who were your main customers then?

MU: School kids. They would eat breakfast and then go school. Eat saimin or hamburger for breakfast. The parents would drop them off and make them eat breakfast (laughs). I tell you, and we were so busy.

MK: Because the parents are dropping them off over there for breakfast, did you folks have breakfast food, too?

MU: No, they eat hamburger stuff. Whatever we had, we make. We don't make anything special.

MK: So, morning time you had the school crowd.

MU: After *pau* school, they all hang around there. Did you know that Fasi met his wife at my place? They used to sit down and talk, Frank Fasi wait for . . .

MK: . . . for Joyce?

MU: Yeah, she went Sacred Hearts. You know that? They used to sit in the corner and talk.

MK: So, your place had places to sit, too?

MU: Yeah. We had booth there, which wasn't good because they could hide from the nuns. Nuns can see. We were good friends with the nuns. Oh, they even call me, "Margaret, is certain-certain people there?" You know the singer, what's her name? The big girl.

MK: Not Melveen Leed, but—

MU: She passed away.

MK: Gardner.

MU: Yeah, Loyal Gardner. She used to hang around.

MK: So the nuns would call you up and ask you, "Is so-and-so was over there?"

MU: Yeah (chuckles). We were good friends, and I knew the name. I was kind of pretty good in knowing names, too. The girl's name, or you know, Sister Elizabeth. Mrs. Nobriga used to be their *da kine*. What you call?

MK: Was she like the head?

MU: No, not the head, but watch for them.

MK: A truant officer?

MU: No, not really (chuckles).

MK: But she would watch over.

MU: Yeah.

MK: Were these kids like regular customers then?

MU: Yeah.

MK: So you got to know some of them by name?

MU: Lots of them by name. I was good friends with this family, the [First Hawaiian Bank], Dods family, the girls. When they [ROTC] sponsor and they get boyfriend, they hang around.

(Laughter)

MK: In those days, did you folks have jukebox?

MU: Yeah, they put in money and play songs.

MK: So you had jukebox, you had tables. About how many tables did you folks have?

MU: One, two, three, about four. And then can sit on the counter, too, where the . . .

MK: Sit on the counter?

MU: Yeah, where the *da kine* was.

MK: And then you had car service, too.

MU: Yeah.

MK: How many cars could come in?

MU: Oh, plenty. But that's nighttime, the car service.

MK: Oh, so daytime, no car service?

MU: No, no more.

MK: And the tables were outside?

MU: No, inside.

MK: How many employees did you folks have?

MU: Three or four girls, but weekends we hired extra, too. You know Mr. [Francis] Funai, the baseball coach from Saint Louis?

MK: Yeah.

MU: The son wanted to make fishing *da kine* book. And then he said, "Oh, my father used to hang around in that corner."

(Laughter)

MK Oh boy (chuckles).

MU: So it's wonderful world when you get to know people, it's good fun. I enjoyed every bit.

- MK: What was your job at the drive-in?
- MU: Oh, anything. Mostly janitress, clean toilet.
- MK: How about waitressing or cooking?
- MU: Yeah, cooking, too. It was flat *da kine* so we make our own. And then, on that flat thing . . .
- MK: Grill?
- MU: Yeah. We used to toast the bun to eat with the meal. You put on top and it's good, put butter.
- MK: What was your husband's job at the drive-in?
- MU: Roasting and making saimin *dashi*. He had the main job, cutting the meat. And they went fishing a lot.
- MK: Oh.
- MU: They had a club. Capitol Surf Casting Club.
- MK: So they would have fresh fish then?
- MU: No, not there. But they would take it home, only to get together with the guys.
- MK: And how many days a week were you folks open?
- MU: Every day, except weekends.
- MK: My goodness. And the hours were from breakfast time to . . .
- MU: Night, closing.
- MK: What time did you folks close?
- MU: Night shift was another group of people, again. Then we go home about maybe, one-thirty, two o'clock in the morning. So work hard.
- MK: So you and your husband, how many hours did you folks work every day?
- MU: Oh, plenty hours.
- MK: One of you was always there?
- MU: Yeah.
- MK: And I know that you had Edene 1939, Margery 1941, Karen 1945, Herbert '46, Dennis 1950. And you had your in-laws, too.
- MU: Yeah, over here.

MK: How did you manage with the children?

MU: In between. Oh, you know why good, too? We can bring home the food. Don't have to cook. But my mother-in-law was a good cook. And she would do anything for me.

MK: So she helped out?

MU: Yes. Oh, plenty. They were good parents, Michi. You would love them, too, if you knew.

MK: I know that you folks ran the Capitol Drive-In from 1945 all the way up to '72, yeah?

MU: When the lease was *pau* already. The Jows owned the place. She work at the bank. All that corner was for these people. In fact, from Pālolo Avenue all the way to Seventh. The Jows, Jow, the name. Chinese.

MK: J-O-W?

MU: Yeah.

MK: You folks didn't want to renew?

MU: No. He was already feeling sick. Oh, we went on a trip to Europe. And then, we came back and went to Japan.

MK: So you folks decided to . . .

MU: Yeah.

MK: And since you folks ran it for so long, from '45 to '72, almost thirty years, yeah?

MU: Yeah.

MK: What things changed from '45 to '72, the big changes you think happened at your drive-in? I know the prices changed . . .

MU: Yeah.

MK: But how about the menu?

MU: Not so much, but then didn't have to make anything so good. Was plain already take-out system, any *kine*. Over here came up, so before that was another people that we knew *wen* open. So, gradually we thought, oh, give up.

MK: And then you have places like McDonalds.

MU: Yeah, competition.

MK: Who were the competitors for Capitol Drive-In? Kaimukī side, eating places.

MU: You know on Kapahulu Avenue had—I forgot his name.

MK: I know nowadays they have like KC Drive-In, and I know on Wai'alae they have Saint Louis Drive-In . . .

MU: Yeah, Drive-In, yeah.

MK: Were there other drive-ins nearby to yours?

MU: No, not much. But, the one mostly was on Kapahulu Avenue. The Chinese one. By Sekiya's, the corner.

MK: Sekiya's?

MU: Before you go Sekiya's, the corner.

MK: Oh, Bea's, now they have Bea's Drive-In?

MU: No, Kapahulu Avenue across from the gas station.

MK: Oh, okay. I know which one you're thinking about. Yeah, that's the one that's a Japanese restaurant now.

MU: Now?

MK: Yeah.

MU: Before used to be one drive-in [Alex's Drive In].

MK: So, that was like one of your main competitors.

MU: Yeah.

MK: So all through the years, '45 to '72, your customers were mostly the students from Sacred Hearts and Saint Louis?

MU: Yeah, and around the neighborhood, too. From Pālolo side and Kapahulu, Kaimukī.

MK: And you know, because you had these young people coming, were there ever any problems you had?

MU: No, hardly.

MK: And then, when you folks had to look for workers over thirty years, where did you get your workers from?

MU: By word of mouth, or they bring their relative or friends.

MK: Did you folks ever employ any of the students from . . .

MU: No, hardly.

MK: So just mostly regular people.

MU: Maybe from Kaimukī High School, some, we got.

MK: I know that when you had New Capitol Café, you folks used to go nightclubbing and picnicking as a group. How about when you folks had the drive-in?

MU: Yeah, same thing, we continued.

MK: When you look back now, what do you think about your life as a restaurant and drive-in owner?

MU: Good. People are always nice. Even we meet someplace, they know you, and what you used to serve, and they know how good it was, "Where's Caps?" That's the name of our place, "Caps." Capitol, Caps. "Oh, we miss Caps." That's what they tell right away. Even Loyal Gardner used to sing and say that she misses Caps. You know when my kids go nightclubbing and hear her sing, she mentions the time they had sneaking out and going eat over there (chuckles) school time.

MK: (Laughs) So even today people remember Caps, then.

MU: Yeah.

MK: What did your husband think about being a restaurant and drive-in owner?

MU: He said never give to the kids.

MK: How come?

MU: Too tired, he said. Too much work. He wasn't too well, too, I think.

MK: It was a hard job.

MU: Yeah, hard job. Hard work.

MK: Well, for today I'm going to end over here then.

MU: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

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